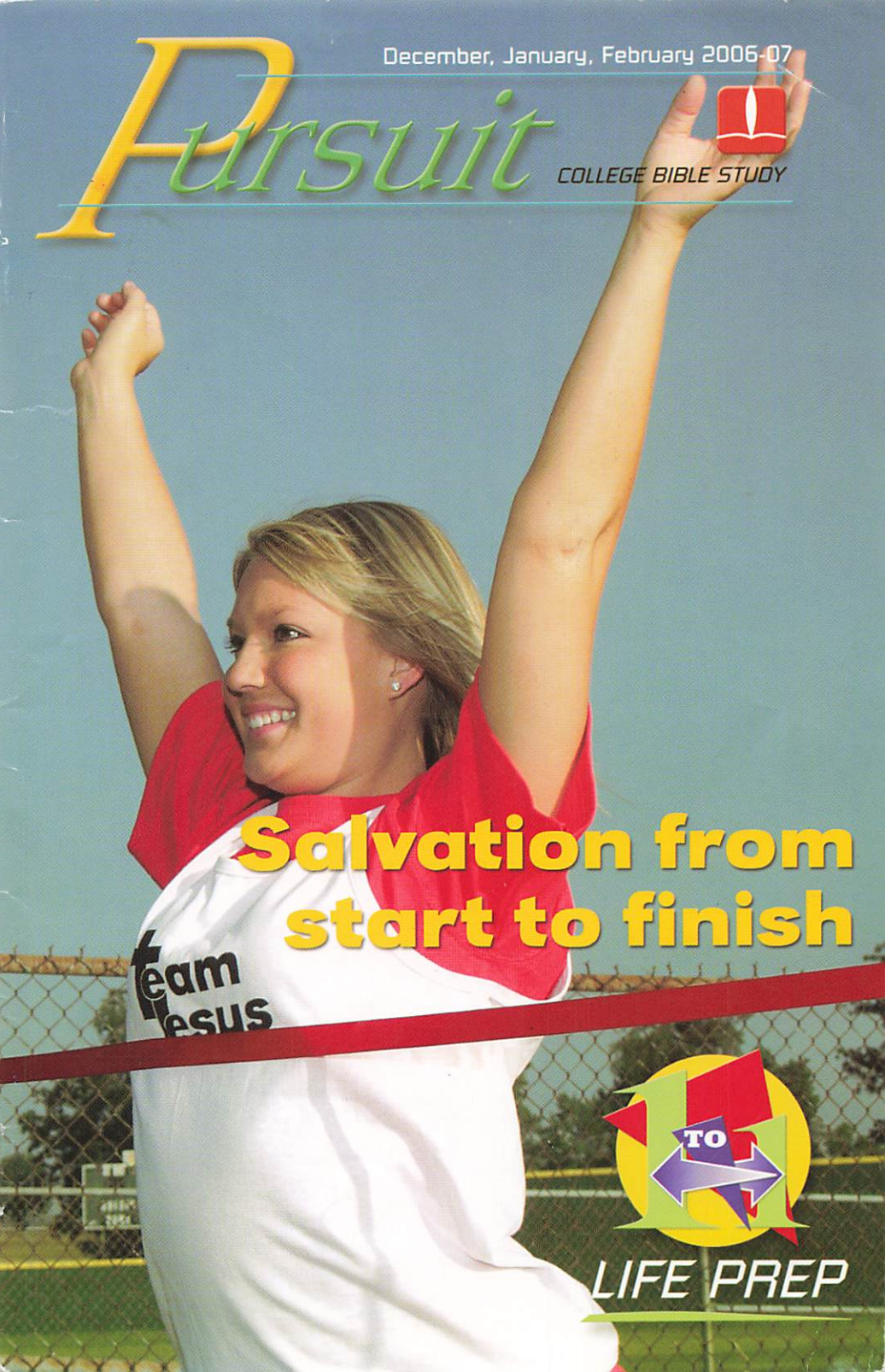
December, January, February 2006-07

Pursuit

COLLEGE BIBLE STUDY



Salvation from start to finish

TO

LIFE PREP

Salvation from start to finish

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THE AUTHOR

Joey Slayton serves as the college minister for Antioch Baptist Church in Conway, Arkansas and is the director of the BMA of Arkansas Youth Department. You can communicate with Joey by sending an e-mail to: *joey.slayton@conwaycorp.net*

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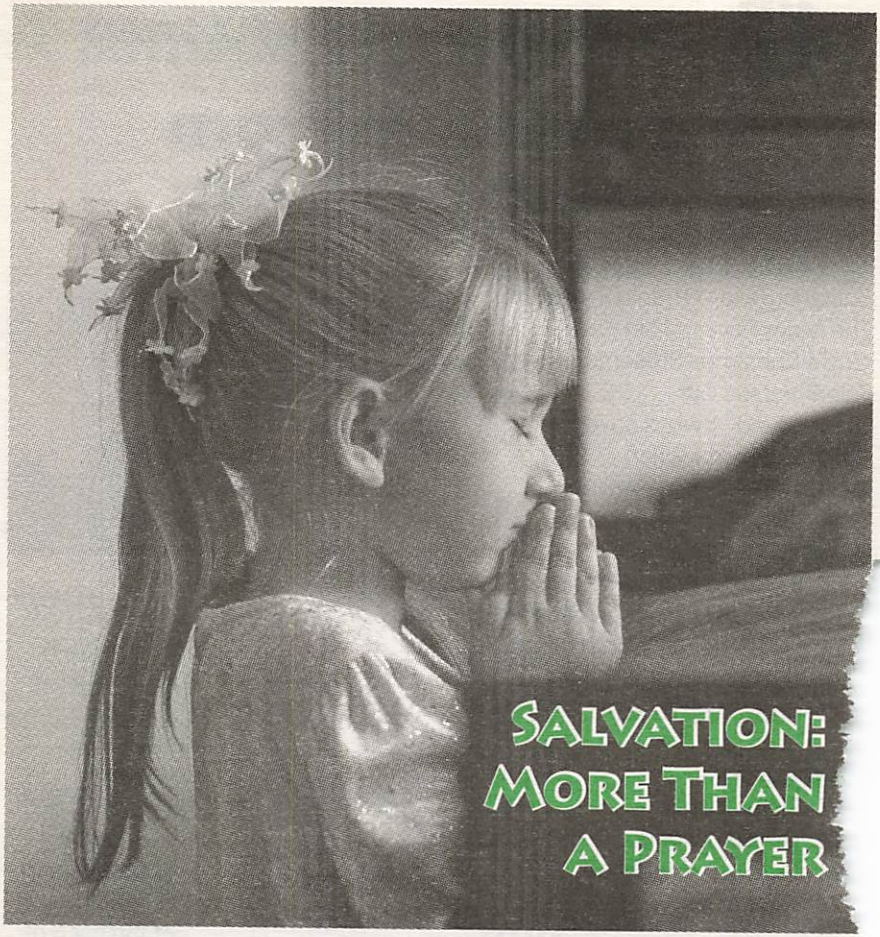


Salvation: More Than a Prayer

Perhaps you were in a pastor's office following a morning worship service. Maybe you knelt in a corner during a church camp or Bible conference. It's possible you were lying in your bed or sitting on your sofa. No matter where you were, the most important day of your life was when you placed your faith in Jesus as your Savior.

It makes no difference if that day was a week ago or seven years ago or more, you can probably remember several details of that important day. However, the day you asked Jesus into your heart was only a very small part of what it means to "be saved."

Salvation is an eternal experience. It began before time when God desired to have a relationship with His creation and will continue in eternity after His plan for the earth is completed. In between your prayer of faith and repentance and heaven are many other concepts and experiences that God wants you to fully grasp.

First, understand that salvation is more about a relationship with God than simply escaping the penalty of

hell. Because God desires an intimate relationship with you, He is constantly shaping you into the image of His Son Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, since Jesus defeated Satan and sin with His death on the cross and resurrection, He wants you to live a victorious life over sin (with His help). Though Jesus defeated him, Satan and the world still want to distract you and cause you to doubt God's love. Adversity is a part of being in Christ, but know that God is right there with you helping you every step of the way.

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOU WHILE YOU ARE ON THE EARTH.

Since salvation is about a relationship, God wants you to also have relationships with those around you. By being baptized and joining a church after your salvation, you become a part of an earthly family for support and accountability. The church is also the way God has chosen to perform His will on earth.

God has a plan for you while you are on the earth. He does not want you to be a spiritual couch potato, but He has gifted you with special abilities to fill a role in your church and serve Him with your life. One day you will stand before Jesus and give an account of how you have served Him while on earth.

Salvation is a great gift that God has given you. It is not based on how good you are, the fact that your parents are Christians, or any other quality in your life. To be honest, God gives you salvation in spite of the fact that sin covers your life. Because He loves you and wants a relationship with you, He did everything necessary to give you that relationship (including becoming a man and being crucified).

Don't take your salvation for granted. Understand that God expects you to serve Him and honor Him with your life. He also wants you to be open to telling others about how He has changed their lives, so He can have a relationship with as many people as possible.

One more time, think back to that day when you prayed to receive Christ. It should be a day you will never forget. While you may not remember the exact date, you should be able to recall the power that called you to Christ and transformed you. While I don't want to fill you with doubt, I do want you to be certain that your decision was genuine and not based on peer pressure or mere emotion.

If you are not absolutely certain that Christ would welcome you into His presence if you were to die today, talk to your Bible study leader, pastor, or Christian friend. Find someone to help you confirm your decision and remove any doubts you have, or lead you to fully accept Christ as your Savior.

Throughout this study you will discover truths that perhaps you have never thought about. God wants you to experience all that He has in store for you in salvation. We pray that this study series will help you do that.

Jerry Sawrie
Youth Editor

It Started With a Plan

A Sunday School was putting on a Christmas pageant which included the story of Mary and Joseph coming to the inn. One boy wanted so very much to be Joseph, but when the parts were handed out, a boy he didn't like was given that part. He was assigned to be the innkeeper instead. He was pretty upset about this but he didn't say anything to the director.

During all the rehearsals he thought what he might do the night of performance to get even with this rival who got to be Joseph. Finally, the night of the performance came, and Mary and Joseph came walking across the stage. They knocked on the door of the inn, and the innkeeper opened the door and asked them gruffly what they wanted. Joseph answered, "We'd like to have a room for the night." Suddenly the innkeeper threw the door open wide and said, "Great, come on in and I'll give you the best room in the house!"

For a few seconds poor little Joseph didn't know what to do. Thinking quickly, he looked inside the door past the innkeeper then said, "No wife of mine is going to stay in a dump like this. Come on, Mary, let's go to the barn." And once again the play was back on track.

Have you ever been a part of something like this — a play, a team of some sort, etc. and someone in the program or event didn't follow things as planned? It really throws everyone off. Someone doesn't run the play right or someone says the wrong lines, and everyone else is just wondering what to do.

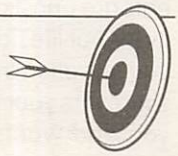
When thinking about Jesus coming into the world, it didn't just happe because God was bored from gettin praises. He wasn't tired from all th heavenly beings giving Him glory. H had a plan! A plan of salvation th was to be for all the people in t world who desperately needed it. was a plan of salvation from start finish for you and me.

Check It Out

Romans 1:1-6

What evidence do you have that Paul is convinced that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament?

Central Truth



Faith in Christ has always been the center of salvation.

Read Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2 and describe Paul's (named Saul in the verses) attitude toward Jesus.

(very bad) (MEAN)

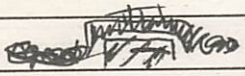
What do you think changed Paul's mind about Jesus being the Messiah? (See Acts 9:3-6.)

Scan verses 3-4 and list at least two ways that Jesus is described.

What event listed in verse 4 proves ıt Jesus was not just a man whose eath meant nothing?

- ❑ A. His birth
- ❑ B. His miracles
- ❑ C. His resurrection
- ❑ D. His crucifixion

The death and resurrection of Jesus allow you to receive salvation. What two things in verse 5 does the gospel of God give you?



What is your definition of *grace*?

Is it hard to believe that God's gift of eternal life to us is *free*? Why or why not?

How can you be obedient to the faith (verse 5)?

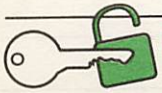
What does it mean for believers to be *"the called of Jesus Christ"* (verse 6)?

What has He called you to do?

CHECK IT OUT

Romans 1:16-17

How would you define the *"gospel of Christ"* (verse 16)?



KEY VERSE

Romans 1:17

Literally the word *gospel* means "good news." What is the good news concerning Christ?

According to verse 16 what power does the gospel have?

How do you think a person could be *"ashamed"* (verse 16) of the gospel?

What is the necessary ingredient for a person to have God's righteousness (verse 17)?

- ❑ A. godly morals
- ❑ B. faith
- ❑ C. baptism
- ❑ D. sincerity

How does a Christian live by faith (verse 17)?

LIFE RESPONSE

Recognize the importance of faith in your life.

It is extremely important to understand salvation. It is the single most important decision in your life. It supercedes what you will study in college, your career, and your partner in marriage. Your eternity depends on it. Faith in the Bible and Jesus Christ is central to establishing a personal relationship with Christ. You do not have to understand everything about the Bible or Jesus to have faith. But you cannot have salvation outside of God's eternal plan.

What are some essential elements of faith concerning Jesus Christ for a person to experience salvation?

Do you think you have to fully understand something before you place your faith in it? Why or why not?

How does that concept apply to a person's relationship with Jesus?

Do you think faith is something you develop or something that God gives to you or a combination of both? Explain your answer.

How would you describe your faith?

My Time With God

Day 1
Genesis 3:15
Life Prep of the Day:
How does this scripture offer hope for Adam and Eve about the future even though they will now suffer the consequences of their sin? How does it offer you hope?

Day 2
Exodus 19:3-6
Life Prep of the Day:
How do you think that these verses apply to believers today?

Day 3
Exodus 12:21-23
Life Prep of the Day:
Think about the picture that Passover represented. How do you think a young Jesus would have felt about participating in this annual observance?

Day 4
Leviticus 1:1-4
Life Prep of the Day:
How would your life be different if you had to follow this procedure every time you sinned?

Day 5
Leviticus 16:29-34
Life Prep of the Day:
Look up the word *atonement* in a Bible dictionary and write a brief definition as well as what it means to you in light of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

For online version
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

5 X 5 BLOG

It's important to spend time with God. He wants to talk to you through His Word, and it will really improve your day if you communicate with your heavenly Father through prayer. At the same time, we realize that sometimes you get busy with other things and don't make the effort like you should.

But do you think you can give God five minutes a day for five days each week? What if you could blog your devotional time with other students online? Would that help keep you committed to giving God what He deserves?

Baptist Publishing House has introduced the 5 X 5 devotional blog. Log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html* and click the link for the 5 x 5 blog. You will discover a scripture to read and a question that you can share your thoughts about online.

While God deserves much more than five minutes a day, five days a week, if you will start by committing to that time, I am confident you will see a tremendous difference in your walk with God.

WHY DO I NEED SALVATION?

Years ago, my youngest daughter, Candyce, and I went shopping for my wife Shannon. It's hard. It's hard for a man to shop for his wife (or even a guy to shop for his girlfriend) because we don't know what they want or what they like. And I promise you from past experience it's not a rifle or a guitar.

But after thinking and searching, Candyce and I thought we had found the perfect gift — pajamas. You can always use pajamas. It's something that you use every day. These were very special. They had a tag that said "One Size Fits All." Shannon opened them up, and you know what? That tag was right. It fits all. It would have fit me and her and Candyce and several other people all at the same time.

My point is, if there ever was a gift that was given that is so large, and so great, that one size truly fits all it's the gift of eternal life: Every person who has ever been born truly needs this gift of forgiveness that God offers to us. There are no special types of salvation for those who have committed many sins or for those who look on the outside as pretty good people. Every person needs salvation because every person has sin covering his life.

CHECK IT OUT

Romans 5:12

How does the Bible say that sin entered the world?

_____

_____

_____

Read Genesis 2:16-17; 3:11-12 and summarize how sin entered the world.

_____

_____

_____

Which of the following is the best simple definition of sin?

- ❑ A. sin is breaking the Ten Commandments
- ❑ B. sin is a bad choice
- ❑ C. sin is disobedience to God
- ❑ D. sin is committing a crime

CENTRAL TRUTH

Every person is separated from God by sin.

What common theme is found in Genesis 2:17 and Romans 5:12?

- ❑ A. sin results in death
- ❑ B. sin only hurts yourself
- ❑ C. sin is not your fault
- ❑ D. sin can be avoided

The major result or penalty of sin is death — physical death and spiritual death. Physical death means that our body can be and one day will be destroyed. Spiritual death is that we have a natural tendency to rebel against God and disobey Him.

CHECK IT OUT

Romans 3:9-18, 23

Our natural tendency is to think that all people are basically good and society or bad circumstances create evil people. What evidence from the verses you read proves that is false?

Does a person have to work harder to commit sin or avoid sin? Explain your answer.

Why do you think we have to be taught to do good things, but the bad comes natural? Weren't we created in the image of God? How can that be?

What is God's standard for holiness and righteousness?

Since everyone that is born, has sin already in his genetic make-up, why do you think God would want to save people?

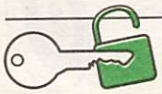
CHECK IT OUT

Revelation 21:

Satan wants you to think that de is the end. From the time you are b you begin the process of dying phys ically. But spiritually you are already separated from God or spiritually dead.

What is the consequence of a person who allows sin to rule his life?

Sin is ugly, but what things in the list of verse 8 might be considered "small sins"?



KEY VERSE

Romans 5:12

What does this teach you about sin and its consequences?

What is the remedy for avoiding eternity in the lake of fire?

LIFE RESPONSE

Realize the penalty of sin on your life.

Sin entered the world when Adam obeyed God. When he sinned he caused all creation to experience the effects of sin and caused man to be separated from God. It is your sin nature that separates you from God. Last week you learned that it has been God's plan from the beginning to make a way for you to not be separated from Him. Why is it important that you follow the plan?

Why does sin separate you and God?

Why do you think that society minimizes sin?

What are some consequences of sin during a person's life on earth?

How would you describe the penalty of sin in your own words?

Why do you think that many people disregard the reality of eternal punishment in hell?

My Time With God

Day 1
Psalm 36:1-4
Life Prep of the Day:
In your own words, rewrite the description of the sinner given in these verses. Are you guilty of any of these things?

Day 2
Psalm 14:1-7
Life Prep of the Day:
Why is it foolish to say there is no God? What about those who say there is a God and then act like He isn't watching? Think about how you would live differently if you knew a camera crew was taping everything you did and God would see it.

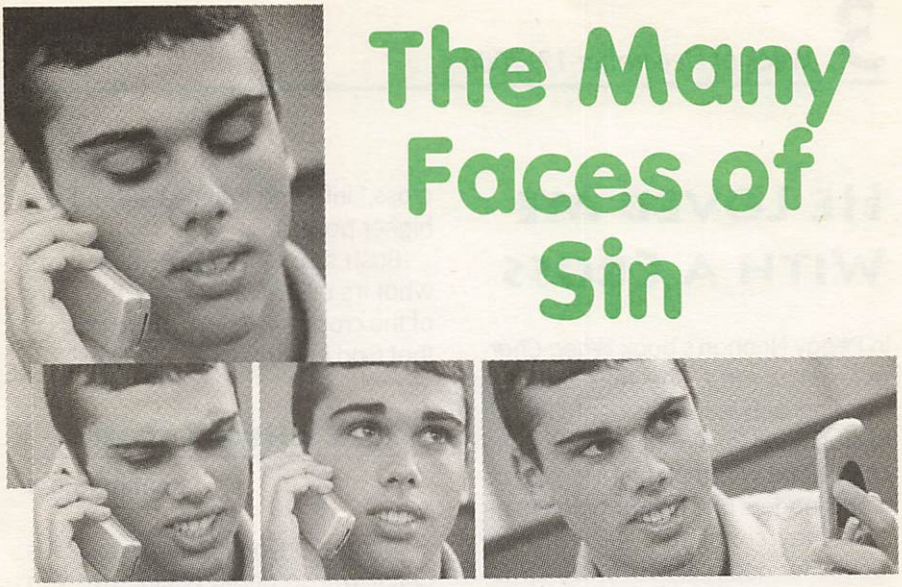
Day 3
Psalm 51:1-7
Life Prep of the Day:
Compare and contrast the different descriptions of sin with the descriptions o actions of forgiveness.

Day 4
Psalm 32:1-5
Life Prep of the Day:
What is the most important benefit of being forgiven?

Day 5
Isaiah 1:18-20
Life Prep of the Day:
Why is God's love the motivating factor behind this invitation?

For online version
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

The Many Faces of Sin



Everyone knows what sin is, right? Many people try to classify sin in terms of breaking the Ten Commandments. They know that cursing, stealing, and killing is wrong, but most people fail to see the broader picture.

Words Associated With Sin

Sin: This most basic word carries with it the idea of making a wrong decision or error in our lives.

Iniquity: This term means a perversion of God's principles. We pervert something by misusing or twisting it to fit our own desires.

Transgression: A transgression is breaking the law, not just the Ten Commandments or the law given to Moses and Israel, but anything that God commands. This word also carries with it the idea of rebellion.

Depravity: This is more of a state of being rather than action. Depravity means that sin lives inside every person, and we cannot escape it.

Types of Sin

Sin takes on many forms in our lives. Some sins are direct sins against God while others affect other people. Even those that might be committed against people still break God's Word.

Jesus warned us that sins can be committed in our mind without ever acting on them. In the Sermon on the Mount He equates lust with adultery (Matthew 5:27-28) and anger with murder (Matthew 5:21-22). All of our action sins begin with thoughts and can arise from emotional sins like envy and greed.

The most overlooked type of sin in a Christian's life is caused by not doing something. James explains that if we know that we should do something good and fail to do it, we have sinned against God (James 4:17).

Only in eternity will we be rid of sin's influence on our lives. Until then we must call upon the Spirit of God to help us avoid it as much as possible.

He Loved Me With a Cross

In Peggy Noonan's book *When Character Was King*, she tells about a meeting between President George W. Bush and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. It was their first meeting as world leaders and Bush wanted to be sure they connected — that they looked for depth of soul and character, not simply had a political meeting.

Bush brought up a story he had read about Putin. His mother had given him a Christian cross that Putin had blessed while in Jerusalem. Bush had been touched by the story.

Putin told a story in response. He had taken to wearing the cross, and one day had set it down and left it in a house he had been visiting. Strangely, the house had burned down, and all Putin could think about was that his cross was lost in the rubble. He motioned for a worker to come to him, so he could ask him to look for the cross. The worker walked over to Putin, stretched out his hand, and showed him the already recovered cross. Putin told Bush, "It was as if something meant for me to have the cross," inferring that he believed in a higher power.

Bush said, "President Putin, that's what it's all about — that's the story of the cross." The story of the cross is that God intended it just for you."

Check It Out

Romans 5:6-8

Is there anyone other than Jesus Christ whose death could save you from your sin? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

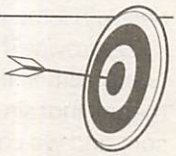
Based on the verses you read how would you characterize Jesus' death?

- ❑ A. God forced Jesus to die for you.
- ❑ B. Satan tricked Jesus into dying for you.
- ❑ C. Jesus willingly gave His life for you.
- ❑ D. Jesus did not realize what He was doing.

Is there anyone in your life you would die for so that they could live?

Central Truth

Jesus' death paid for your sin.



Would you be willing to make the same sacrifice for someone you barely know or one of your enemies? Why or why not?

What was the motivating factor behind Jesus' death (verse 8)?

What makes God love us so much when we are called His enemies?

CHECK IT OUT

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

Select one of the following scriptures and compare it to 2 Corinthians 5:14.

- John 3:16
- John 15:13
- Galatians 2:20

According to these verses how should knowing Jesus died for you affect the way you live?

How can you *"live unto"* (verse 15) the One Who died for you?

CHECK IT OUT

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

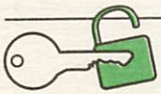
What happens to a person who is *"in Christ"* (verse 17)?

If you have accepted Christ as your Savior, how are you a new person in relation to your life before your salvation (verse 17)?

CHECK IT OUT

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Reconciliation refers to the repairing of the relationship between you



KEY VERSE

Romans 5:8

and God. What caused the broken relationship between you and God?

Who is the source of reconciliation?

What do you think it means when Paul says we have been given the *"ministry of reconciliation"* (verse 18)?

What are the responsibilities of an ambassador for Christ (verse 20)?

LIFE RESPONSE

Allow the love of God to penetrate your heart.

Recently my family went to a drive-in movie theater and watched *Finding Nemo*. If you remember Nemo was captured by a scuba diver and put in a fish tank in the office of a dentist. The main focus of the movie was on Nemo's father, Marlin, crossing the ocean seeking and trying to save his son.

God has done the same for us. Satan has captured us and enslaves us. His goal is our destruction. But God would do anything, cross the ocean, the universe, time and even send His only Son to die for us, just to save us.

Why do you think there are people who reject the love of Christ in their lives?

Does God love Christians more than sinners? Why or why not?

Knowing that God loves you so much, how does your life reflect your gratefulness for His love?

If you have been saved you have a story of how Christ has changed your life. Have you shared that story with others? Why or why not?

Create an acrostic (words or phrases that begin with letters in a word) that praises the love of Jesus Christ.

L _____

O _____

V _____

E _____

My Time With God

Day 1
Mark 15:11-20
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
How does it make you feel to know Jesus died in your place? Write a prayer of thanksgiving.

Day 2
Matthew 27:39-46
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Why was it necessary for the Father to forsake (or look away from) Jesus while on the cross?

Day 3
John 19:25-30
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
What was *"finished"* (John 19:30) with Jesus' death on the cross?

Day 4
John 19:31-37
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
If you have accepted Christ as your Savior, describe the day that you asked Jesus into your heart.

Day 5
Matthew 27:50-54
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Why do you think repentance is necessary for gaining a relationship with Christ?

FOR ONLINE VERSION
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

God's Gift to You

In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* C. S. Lewis noted that the effect of the rule of the White Witch, which represents evil, is to cause it to be "always winter but never Christmas."

Winter eventually wears on even those who love it. It becomes burdensome and is occasionally dangerous. Celebrating Christmas in winter is important because Christmas is a time of joy and hope in the mist of the sinful, dangerous, upside-down world.

I am sure that you have great memories of a special Christmas in your childhood where you got the coolest gift ever. Sadly, it has been distorted over the years and has turned into a "what did you get this year for Christmas?" kind of holiday. But the real reason for celebration is Jesus — God's gift to us.

Check It Out

Romans 6:23

When Adam willfully disobeyed God's commandment he chose to sin and that sin nature is passed on to every person that is ever born.

What is the consequence or payment for sin?

_____

How is death caused by sin both physical and spiritual in nature?

_____

_____

_____

How is eternal life a *"gift of God"*?

_____

_____

_____

How did Jesus Christ make this gift available to you?

_____

_____

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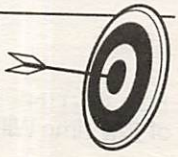
Check It Out

Romans 10:8-9

God has many ways to reveal Himself to people. What are some of

Central Truth

Repentance and faith are the steps to salvation.



the ways God spoke to people in the Old Testament? (Check all that apply.)

- ❑ A. text messages
- ❑ B. angels
- ❑ C. visions and dreams
- ❑ D. TV infomercials
- ❑ E. prophets

In Paul's day, the Old Testament had been written but was not accessible to every person like it is today, yet what does Paul say about the Word in verse 8?

List at least three types of modern media that can be used to communicate the message of the gospel.

Once a person hears the message of the gospel, he or she is responsible for a response to that message. Since you are studying this scripture this week, you are now responsible for the information you have just received. You are holding the box — are you going to open it or shove it back into the closet?

Verse 9 tells you how to open the gift of eternal life. What is the first step presented in this scripture?

How would you define the word *confess?*

The word *confess* literally means to agree with or say the same thing as another. When you confess you are agreeing with God that you are a sinner and that you have no hope without the gift that He is offering. Why do you think it is important to confess your sin verbally?

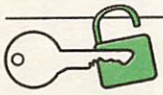
What does verse 9 say you must do besides confess with your mouth?

What specific thing must you believe in your heart for salvation?

CHECK IT OUT

Romans 10:10-13

How do these verses teach that salvation is available to all people?



KEY VERSE

Romans 10:9

Relate how you see the following elements of salvation in the verses you read.

Repentance:

Faith:

How do these verses teach that salvation is an individual decision, and not one someone can make for you?

Do you think that it is important for a person to publicly proclaim his decision to accept Christ? Why or why not?

LIFE RESPONSE

Receive Jesus as your Savior today.

To open the gift of salvation, it's not enough to just believe in God. You must believe that Jesus is God in the flesh and that He lived a sinless life so that He could be the acceptable substitute sacrifice for your sins. You must believe that He died in your place and rose again to guarantee a relationship with God and eternal life.

Do you know for certain that you have personally opened the gift of salvation by confessing your sin and placing your faith in Jesus Christ?

❑ yes ❑ no

If you answered no, talk to your Bible study leader or pastor about finding Christ. You can also read "God's Christmas Presents" on page 22 for more information.

If you know Jesus as your Savior, how does your life communicate that decision in the following areas of your life?

The music you listen to:

The way you spend your free time:

The time you spend in worship and service:

How is salvation the greatest gift you ever received?

My Time With God

Day 1
John 3:1-8
Life Prep of the Day:
Imagine you are hearing the phrase *"born again"* for the very first time. What kind of questions would you have?

Day 2
John 3:16-17
Life Prep of the Day:
How would life be different if God had sent Jesus to condemn the guilty instead of save us?

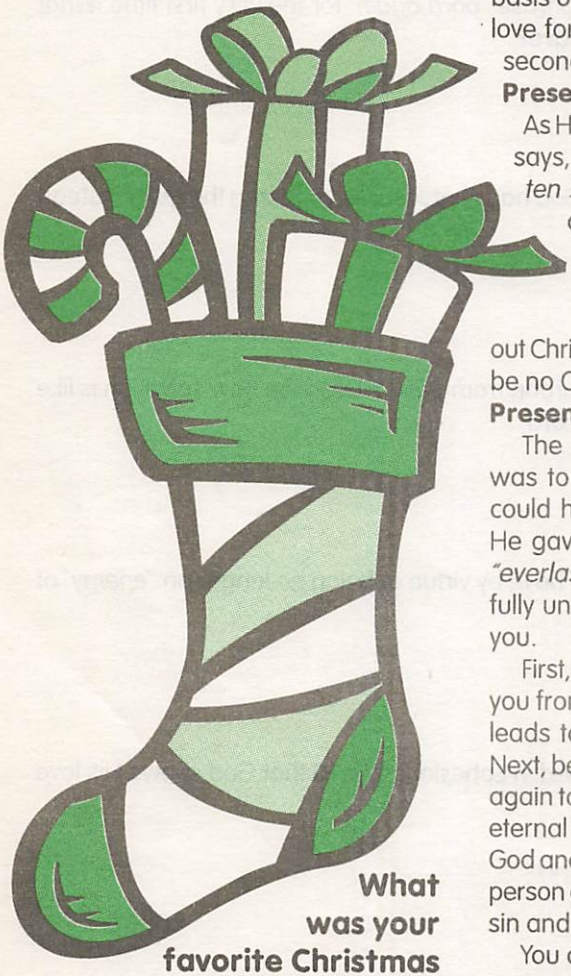
Day 3
Acts 10:34-43
Life Prep of the Day:
Remission is the same as a pardon from prison. Describe how salvation is like getting a "get out of jail free" card.

Day 4
Romans 5:9-11
Life Prep of the Day:
List some of the blessings you have by virtue of being no longer an *"enemy"* of God.

Day 5
Ephesians 2:4-10
Life Prep of the Day:
List the specific ways mentioned in Ephesians 2:4-10 that God shows His love to you.

For online version
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

God's Christmas Presents



What was your favorite Christmas present of all time?

Maybe it was a new video game system, bicycle, or MP3 player. No matter how cool you think that present was, nothing can compare to the Christmas presents that God has given you.

John 3:16 states that God has given you three Christmas presents.

Present 1 — His love

"For God so loved the world," Jesus says. God's unconditional love is the basis of everything that He does. His love for you is why He gave you the second present.

Present 2 — His Son

As He continues in John 3:16, Jesus says, *"that he gave his only begotten Son."* God allowed Jesus, His only Son, to come to earth. That is the focus of this Christmas season. Though Christmas has gone commercial, without Christ coming to earth there would be no Christmas.

Present 3 — His Life

The reason Jesus came to earth was to die for your sin so that you could have a relationship with Him. He gave His life so you could have *"everlasting life."* It is not difficult to fully unwrap all of God's presents to you.

First, realize that your sin separates you from God and staying in your sin leads to eternal punishment in hell. Next, believe that Jesus died and rose again to pay for your sin and give you eternal life. Third, confess your sin to God and ask Jesus to make you a new person on the inside by removing your sin and placing His heart inside you.

You can take those steps by praying a prayer like this:

Dear God, I know that I am a sinner, but I place my faith in Jesus' death and resurrection as payment for my sin. Thank You for loving me and giving me eternal life. Amen.

Cross Words

Did you know that the average person spends one-fifth of his or her life talking? If all of our words were put into print, the result would be:

- a single day's words would fill a fifty-page book
- in one year your words would fill 132 books of two hundred pages each
- in a lifetime you could fill a small public library with your words

Among all those words there are undoubtedly some that are spoken in anger, carelessness, or haste. But when it comes to our salvation there are many words that help us to understand the depth of our salvation and how we can better live it out.

Check It Out

Romans 3:21-26

How are righteousness and sin opposites?

_____

_____

_____

How does verse 22 say that a person becomes righteous?

_____

_____

How does verse 23 teach that everyone is in need of God's righteousness?

_____

_____

_____

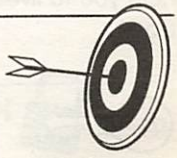
What is the agent of being justified according to verse 24?

- ❑ A. baptism
- ❑ B. Christian service
- ❑ C. God's grace through redemption
- ❑ D. none of the above

Redemption, (verse 24) in a basic sense, means to purchase. How did God purchase us in salvation?

- ❑ A. by Jesus' death and resurrection
- ❑ B. by paying money to Satan
- ❑ C. by making us work for salvation
- ❑ D. all of the above

Central Truth



Salvation completely changes your life.

Propitiation (pro-PISH-ee-ay-shun) (verse 25) means that Jesus satisfied the demand of your sin (death) by His death. Why couldn't you satisfy the demand of your own sin?

Remission (verse 25) means to pardon someone and to remove the penalty. How is a pardon different from not being punished?

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 6:11

How does being *"washed"* illustrate what it means to be forgiven?

Sanctification (sanc-te-fe-KAY-shun) means to be set apart by God for a special purpose. What do you think that special purpose is?

Sanctification is built on the word that means "holy." How does salvation help you to live a holy life and serve God?

Being *"justified"* means that God has declared you to be righteous and free from sin. How would being free from sin enable you to have a personal relationship with God?

CHECK IT OUT

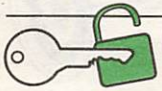
Romans 6:5-14

List at least three attributes of a transformed life that are mentioned in these verses.

What do you think Paul means when he says that you are crucified with Christ (verse 6) or dead with Christ (verse 8)?

What is the reason why believers can live victorious lives over sin?

Since God transformed you at



KEY VERSE

1 Corinthians 6:11

salvation why should you not let sin control you?

How can a believer *"yield"* himself to God (verse 13)?

LIFE RESPONSE

Live in the full knowledge of Christ's work in you.

If you know Jesus as Savior, you are transformed. God did many things inside of you when you repented and placed your faith in Him. Your sin has been forgiven and completely erased. God lives in you and gives you power to hold strong against things that tempt you to sin. That knowledge (though you may not completely understand it) should drive you to honor God with your life.

Select one of the following terms and use it as the basis to answer the first three questions below: *redemption, sanctification, justification, remission.*

How would you define the term in your own words?

How does this action of salvation cause you to praise God?

How does this term motivate you to allow your life to honor God?

Describe in your own words how Christ changed you on the inside at salvation.

How does a spiritual transformation by God affect other areas of your life?

REVIEW ANSWERS

Across
2. redeem, 5. adversity, 6. baptism, 10. confess, 11. witness, 13. unleavened, 14. justified

Down
1. judgment, 3. sanctification, 4. sin, 7. repent, 8. spiritual gift, 9. gospel, 12. death

My Time With God

Day 1
Colossians 1:12-14
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Write a thank-you note to God for how He is changing your life through a relationship with Him.

Day 2
Galatians 4:4-5
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Do you know anyone who is adopted? How does it change your perspective of things if you consider that your salvation is like being adopted?

Day 3
Romans 5:1-2
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Besides an eternity in heaven, what other benefits do you see from your salvation?

Day 4
2 Timothy 2:19-21
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
How are you a useful vessel in your church?

Day 5
1 Peter 1:18-19
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Memorize 1 Peter 1:18-19. Why is the blood of Jesus such an important aspect of the Lord's Supper?

FOR ONLINE VERSION
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

PICTURE THIS

Paul Harvey wrote in *Guidepost* magazine about his own baptism. He said that even though he had received almost every reward for his broadcasting ability that he still felt empty inside.

One summer, however, he and his wife were vacationing in a place called Cave Creek, Arizona. Sunday morning came and they decided to go to church. So they went to this little church, and there were only twelve other people present. He believed in Jesus, but he had never gone forward in a church service. One night he had prayed in his hotel room and asked Jesus to come into his heart, but he felt that there was still something that was missing.

He said that the preacher got up and announced that his sermon was going to be about baptism. Paul Harvey said, "I yawned. But as he started talking about it I found myself interested. He talked about the symbolism behind it, and how it symbolized the complete surrender of one's life to Jesus Christ, and how there was nothing really magic in the water. But there was this cleansing inside that took place when you yielded yourself to Jesus."

He went on to say, "Finally, when he came to the end of his sermon he said, 'If any of you have not been baptized in this way, I invite you to come forward and join me here at the pulpit.'"

Paul Harvey said, "To my surprise, I found myself going forward.... Since totally yielding to Him in baptism, my heart can't stop singing. Also, perhaps because baptism is such a public act and because one's dignity gets as drenched as one's body, I discovered a new unself-consciousness in talking about my beliefs."

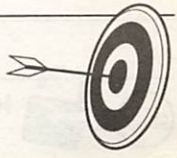
CHECK IT OUT

Romans 6:1-4

Once a person accepts Jesus as his Savior, what's next? The Bible makes it clear that God wants you to publicly identify yourself as a Christian. This is accomplished by baptism. Baptism is a public declaration that you have left your sinful life and are now following Jesus Christ. Read Matthew 28:19 and explain why baptism should be a priority with churches.

CENTRAL TRUTH

Church membership is a badge of honor for the beiiever.



Though baptism is not essential to a person's salvation, why do you think Jesus commanded new believers be baptized?

According to Romans 6:1-4, what events surrounding the earthly ministry of Jesus are connected to baptism? (Check all that apply.)

- ❑ A. birth
- ❑ B. death
- ❑ C. Transfiguration
- ❑ D. burial
- ❑ E. Resurrection
- ❑ F. temptation

Explain in your own words how baptism pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Why is it important that a person publicly state that he is a believer in Jesus?

How do you think baptism should affect the way you live your life?

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

The Passover was instituted in the Old Testament to remember Israel's release from Egyptian slavery. A lamb was killed, unleavened bread was eaten, and cups of grape juice were used in the service/meal. During the Passover meal hours before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus instituted a new memorial service.

What two foods did Jesus use?

What did Jesus say the foods represented?

Unleavened bread:

Cup:

How was the lamb that was killed at Passover present at the first Lord's Supper?

KEY VERSE

Ephesians 3:21

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 11:26-28

The Lord's Supper is a very significant time for your church. This special service is a time for baptized believers to picture and remember Christ's death.

Why is it important for the church to have a celebration of the Lord's Supper?

What do you think it means to participate in the Supper *"unworthily"*?

How is the Lord's Supper both a memorial and a celebration?

LIFE RESPONSE

Proudly identify yourself as a member of your church.

The next time your church celebrates the Lord's Supper or someone is baptized think about what it really means and see if it doesn't cause you to be a little more reverent or a little more contemplative. Get the picture in your head and see if it makes a difference in the way that you live your life.

Baptism is a public declaration that you have left behind, or died to, your former sinful life and are now following Jesus.

If a believer is unwilling to be obedient to Christ by being baptized, what does that say about his willingness to obey in other areas of his life?

Why do you think baptism and the Lord's Supper both focus on the death of Christ?

How does your church make the Lord's Supper a special and important service?

How can you honor God when you participate in the Lord's Supper?

How do baptism and the Lord's Supper help you connect with your church family?

My Time With God

Day 1
Matthew 3:13-17
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Why do you think Jesus needed to be baptized?

Day 2
Acts 8:35-38
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Why do you think this man that Philip baptized wanted so quickly to be baptized? What was the rush?

Day 3
Acts 2:37-41
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Wow! Three thousand people saved and baptized on one day. How do you think churches can see powerful responses to the gospel today? Pray that you can be a part of such a revival.

Day 4
Matthew 28:16-20
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
The Great Commission was given to your church. How are you helping to carry out this commission?

Day 5
1 Corinthians 11:17-32
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
How are the problems in this church similar to the problems churches have today?

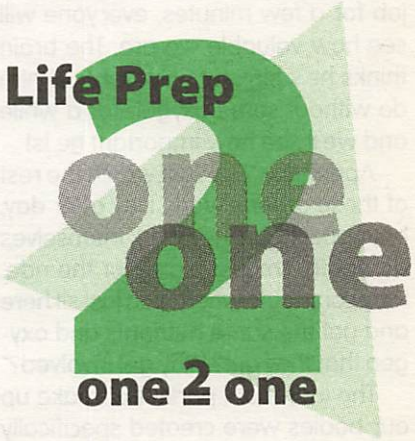
FOR ONLINE VERSION
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

Say Good-Bye to This Book

This is the last time that you will use the Bible study magazine *Pursuit* for your Bible studies. But that doesn't mean you will not have anything to study in the spring.

In March, instead of having a magazine style Bible study guide, *Pursuit* will be printed as a full-color leaflet each week. There will still be interactive Bible studies, but they will be easier to use, and have sweet color graphics and photos.

You can get a sneak peak of what they will look like by logging on to *1-to-1: Online* at *www.bph.org/1to1.html*. We think you are going to love the new format. So get ready for the new look of *Pursuit*.



I Need a Hand

The church is called the body of Christ. Have you ever thought about what it would be like if the members of our physical bodies behaved like the members of the spiritual body sometimes do?

Heart: "You know, I'm just stuck in a rut. For the last twenty years all I do is beat and beat. Lub, dub ... lub, dub. I'm tired of it. It's time for someone else to step up and do this job. OK, feet, you pump the blood.

Lungs: We are so under-appreciated around here. If we quit doing our job for a few minutes, everyone will see how valuable we are. The brain thinks he's big stuff. Humph! Let him do without some oxygen for a while and we'll see how important he is!

Appendix: "Ha! Just watch the rest of those organs work. Day after day, hour after hour, they work themselves do death. I'm just along for the ride. Why contribute when I can just sit here and get the same nutrients and oxygen that they get? Why get involved?"

The individual parts that make up our bodies were created specifically for certain tasks within the body as a whole. The body works as a finely tuned machine when all the parts do what they were uniquely gifted to do. There are no unimportant parts — except the appendix. Don't be an appendix in your church.

Check It Out

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

In this passage Paul compares the church to a physical body. What makes this a good analogy?

_____

_____

_____

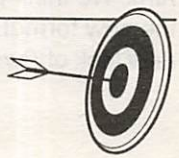
The body is held together by tendons and bones but without the heart pumping blood throughout the system it could not survive. According to verse 13 what is the common thread that ties a church together?

- ❑ A. Church Covenant and Bible
- ❑ B. pastors and deacons
- ❑ C. Holy Spirit and baptism
- ❑ D. casseroles and chocolate pie

Each member of the church has identified himself or herself with Christ by submitting to baptism. The fact that

Central Truth

Every member of a church is important.



the Holy Spirit lives in each Christian also unites believers.

How does Paul emphasize that different cultures and backgrounds should be united in a church?

How do these verses help you know that every church member is important?

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 12:15-20

Paul tries his hand at a little humor to make his point. What if a part of your body was to be jealous of another part and go on strike? It would be simply absurd! What happens when any part of your body doesn't do its job?

What would happen if the following situations were true in a church?

Everyone was a pianist, but no one wanted to sing.

Everyone was a great leader, but no one wanted teach a Bible study.

Everyone could relate to teens, but no one wanted to help with children's ministry.

What verse that you just read teaches that God ensures that every ministry position in a church will have a qualified worker? How does it teach this?

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 12:21-26

Why do you think there are some positions in your church that seem more important than others are?

What are some positions in your church that seem insignificant, but are

KEY VERSE

1 Corinthians 12:12

essential to the church functioning properly?

How does everyone filling a role in the church promote unity?

Paul knew that where there are differences there would be divisions. What was his solution for division in verse 25?

John had a solution for this same problem in John 13:35. Write it out in your own words:

LIFE RESPONSE

Accept the responsibilities of being a member of your church.

For a team to achieve success, all the players have to play their assigned positions. That is the way that God designed a team to function. Just as there is no I in team, there is no I in church. For the church to achieve success, all the members have to perform in their assigned positions.

If your church were compared to a body, would it be healthy and thriving or diseased and disabled? Why?

What are you doing to make your church a healthy and successful body?

Is there someone in your church who seems to get more attention than you? Are you ever jealous of someone because of their position or their gifts? How can you correct this attitude?

What is your position of service in your church?

How do you think God will use you in future years as a part of a church body?

My Time With God

Day 1
Colossians 1:18
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Why does Jesus have the right to be the head of the church?

Day 2
Romans 15:5-6
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
What does it mean to *"glorify God"* by being like-minded? Why would that be important?

Day 3
Ephesians 4:1-4
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Paul describes several ways to *"walk worthy"* (verse 1) of the job you've been called to. Select one of them and discuss how a believer can fulfill it.

Day 4
Ephesians 4:5-8
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Is there a difference between gifts and talents? How are you using your gifts and/or talents to honor God?

Day 5
Ephesians 4:11-16
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
How can neglecting your gifts and talents affect the unity and ministry of your church?

FOR ONLINE VERSION
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

Gifted and Talented

Come with me into West Texas during the Great Depression. Mr. Ira Yates was like many other ranchers and farmers. He had a lot of land, and a lot of debt. Mr. Yates wasn't able to make enough on his ranching operation to pay the mortgage, and was in danger of losing his ranch. With little money for clothes or food, his family (like many others) was forced to live on financial help from the U.S. Government.

Day after day, as he grazed his sheep over those rolling west Texas hills, he was greatly troubled about how he would pay his bills. Then a crew from an oil company came into the area and told him there might be oil on his land. They asked permission to drill a wildcat well, and he signed a lease contract.

At 1,115 feet below the surface, the drillers struck a huge oil reserve. The first well came in at 80,000 barrels a day. Many subsequent wells were more than twice as large. In fact, thirty years after the discovery, a government test on one of the wells showed it still had the potential flow of 125,000 barrels of oil a day.

Mr. Yates owned it all. The day he purchased the land he had received the oil and mineral rights. Yet, he'd been living on government assistance. He was a multimillionaire living in poverty. Why? He didn't know the oil was there even though he owned it.

It is fair to say that you and I are a lot like Mr. Yates at times. We are heirs of a vast treasure, yet we live in spiritual poverty. We are entitled to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and His energizing power, yet we live unaware of our birthright.

Check It Out

Romans 12:3-5

Last week you studied about the church and how God places specific people in specific places so that they can effectively serve Him. Why do you think that it is important to have people with different talents and abilities in the church?

_____

_____

_____

Why is it important for Paul to point

Central Truth

God equips every Christian with special abilities to serve Him.

out that even though everyone is gifted differently, we all have the same Lord and God?

What do you think it means to think *"more highly than he ought to think"*?

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-6, 11

How is a spiritual gift different from a talent?

How do you know that every believer has at least one spiritual gift?

Why do you think we get gifts that the Spirit desires rather than being able to select them ourselves?

CHECK IT OUT

Romans 12:6-8

This passage lists seven different service gifts that are readily used in church ministry. It is not a complete list, but it is the most common.

Which of the gift(s) listed would most likely be seen in a Bible study class?

Which of the gift(s) would most likely be used in private or with few people seeing?

Who in your church have you seen or would expect to see the following spiritual gifts in action?

administration:

exhortation (encouragement):

ministry:

KEY VERSE

Ephesians 4:7

Why is it important to understand that these gifts are to be used with the power of God rather than your own abilities?

Do you think a person could lose his or her gifts if they are not used or misused? Why or why not?

LIFE RESPONSE

Identify and utilize your spiritual gifts.

If you are a saved person then you have been given at least one spiritual gift. Most likely God has given you several spiritual gifts. Therefore, it is essential for you to identify those gifts, use those gifts, and develop the gifts into peak performance. Just because you may not see yourself as an important part of your church doesn't mean that is the way that God views you. Do not neglect to use your gifts in service now.

Which of the gifts studied in Romans 12 do you suspect you might have?

How can you connect past service and ministry experiences with one of the gifts listed in Romans 12?

In what ways does your church allow young adults to use their gifts and talents?

How do you think a Christian can cultivate the gifts he has been given?

COMING UP NEXT

In the spring months you will begin a new Bible study series on the lives and ministries of two important Old Testament prophets. Isaiah and Elijah each served God as prophets, but their ministries were quite different. As you study "A Tale of Two Prophets" during March, April, and May look for these two points: (1) How did Isaiah introduce the Messiah to the world? (2) How did Elijah stay focused on his ministry?

My Time With God

Day 1
Matthew 20:26-28
Life Prep of the Day:
How is the philosophy of this passage different from what the world teaches about leadership?

Day 2
2 Timothy 4:1-5
Life Prep of the Day:
Think about the urgency of spreading the gospel. Why would it then be important for you to know your spiritual gift as soon as possible?

Day 3
1 Peter 4:10-11
Life Prep of the Day:
How can a person allow his gifts and abilities to overshadow God's power in his life?

Day 4
2 Timothy 2:24
Life Prep of the Day:
How would the qualities listed in this passage help the church reach out to others with the gospel? How would the opposite traits drive people away from God?

Day 5
1 Timothy 4:6
Life Prep of the Day:
What do you think it takes to attain the title of a good minister or servant of the Lord?

For online version
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

Gift Versus Talent

Perhaps you have heard someone play a beautiful concerto on a piano and you said, "That person is so gifted." Maybe you heard a sports commentator mention that a certain all-American is a "gifted athlete." When a politician finishes an inspiring speech, it is possible to hear someone remark that he is a "gifted speaker." As you study the Bible you recognize that every Christian is a gifted servant since God has given each of His children spiritual gifts to serve Him.

Is there a difference between the examples given above and the special gifts that God gives us at salvation? Yes there is. Each person has some natural abilities in many areas of his life. These are called talents. Some people can easily play musical instruments or sing. Others have special abilities to repair things or build things. But none of those are spiritual gifts.

The easiest way to identify a talent is if it is something that can be improved through practice and experience. A person may have a gift for music, but she must still practice and rehearse. Talents may have a genetic background, but the skill must still be developed.

On the other hand, spiritual gifts are supernatural abilities where God gets the most credit. Some of the gifts might compliment talents a person has. A person with the gift of exhortation or teaching might also be a good speaker that helps in performing that ministry, but it is not essential.

Your spiritual gifts are ways for God's power to flow through you above what you may think is possible. They also produce a passion in you to perform that type of ministry in your church. You need to use whatever talents you have (music, speaking, working with your hands) in service to God, but utilize those special gifts to fulfill the ministry role God has for you in your church.

Time to Grow Up

The McIlhenny Tabasco sauce folks have adopted the Scoville heat unit scale to rate the spiciness of their pepper sauce. To give you an idea, ketchup would be a 0 on the Scoville heat unit scale. Their mild Tabasco Green Pepper Sauce would rate about 600 Scoville heat units. Their medium tempered Tabasco Pepper Sauce would rate about 5,000 Scoville Heat Units. And their hottest sauce, Tabasco Habanero Sauce would rate almost 9,000 Scoville units. However, the sauce is quite mild compared to the number of Scoville units in the hottest habanero chili ever recorded — 577,000 Scoville units.

Jesus is calling us to be the hot sauce of the earth, so I want you to rate the heat of your spiritual sauce on the Tabasco scale. Is the zestiness of your faith just starting to warm up like the green sauce (and praise God if it is), or is your commitment as a Christian growing and becoming zesty like the pepper sauce? Or is your spiritual sauce fire-hot for Jesus Christ like the habanero sauce?

Becoming a fully committed Christian does not happen overnight. It's a process. So where you are on the spiritual Tabasco scale is not a matter of right or wrong, it's a matter of spiritual growth. Now let me ask you a question. Is your heart beginning to feel some holy heartburn? The spicier your spiritual pepper sauce becomes, the hotter your heart will burn to serve Jesus in a significant way. If your heart is heating up with the love of Jesus Christ, then do something about it.

Check It Out

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

Paul states in his letter to the Corinthians that there is a difference between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom that comes from God.

How would you describe the wisdom of the world?

_____

_____

_____

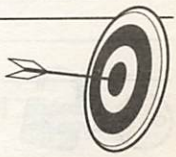
How do you think the wisdom of the world differs from the wisdom that comes from God?

_____

_____

Central Truth

God desires for you to become a mature Christian.



Why is it important for believers to focus more on the wisdom of God rather than the wisdom and knowledge of the world?

Verse 7 describes the wisdom of God as a *"mystery"* and *"hidden."* By definition the word mystery used in this passage implies a secret thing that is only confided to one who has been initiated. How does that apply to a believer?

Some believe that verse 9 refers to the glory that will be in heaven. Taken in context with verse 10, it cannot mean only what is to come in heaven. God reveals the secrets to those who belong to Him. How does He do this?

There are many things about God and the Bible you may not fully understand right now, but how do you know that God wants you to be able to understand deep spiritual truths?

CHECK IT OUT

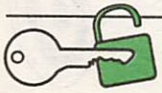
1 Corinthians 2:11-16

Your spirit is the part of you that has the power to know, desire, decide, and act. It is the part of you that interacts with God through His Spirit. According to verse 12 why does the Spirit of God live in us?

According to verse 14 why is it difficult (or impossible) for an unbeliever to fully understand spiritual truths of the Bible?

What kind of words do you think Paul is talking about that are only *"spiritually discerned"* (verse 24)?

What do you think it means to have the *"mind of Christ"* (verse 16)?



KEY VERSE

2 Peter 3:18

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 3:1-2

From this passage what do you think was the problem that Paul had with the Corinthian church?

How would you explain the difference between the *"milk"* of the Bible and the *"meat"* (verse 2)?

What should you expect from someone who has been saved for ten years compared to someone who has been saved only a few months?

What do you think it means when someone has been saved for years but has not had any apparent growth in their spirit?

LIFE RESPONSE

Continually work toward spiritual maturity.

Your body stops growing between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two (for most people), but your spirit never stops maturing. Those who are in tune with what the Holy Spirit is teaching them will tell you that there is so much more about God that they do not comprehend and are still learning. The important thing is that you never stop learning and growing in your relationship with Christ.

How would you label yourself in your spiritual life with Christ?

- ❑ not saved
- ❑ spiritual baby
- ❑ spiritual toddler
- ❑ spiritual child
- ❑ spiritual teen
- ❑ mature but still growing

Do you think that you have had consistent growth in Christ since your salvation? Why or why not?

What do you think are some marks of a Christian who is growing in Christ?

What are some of the "deep spiritual truths" that you would like to learn more about?

My Time With God

Day 1
2 Peter 3:18
Life Prep of the Day:
What are some basic ways you can help yourself grow spiritually?

Day 2
1 Peter 2:2
Life Prep of the Day:
What is your favorite food? How did it become your favorite? How can you choose a favorite spiritual food? Explain why that would be your favorite.

Day 3
2 Peter 1:5-8
Life Prep of the Day:
Which of the character qualities listed in 2 Peter 1:5-8 do you exhibit the most and why?

Day 4
1 Peter 1:6-8
Life Prep of the Day:
How is adversity sometimes more effective than calm and tranquility in helping you grow spiritually?

Day 5
James 1:2-5
Life Prep of the Day:
Why do you think that adversity is a natural part of being a Christian?

For online version
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

Here Comes Trouble

In a seminary missions class, Herbert Jackson told how, as a new missionary, he was assigned a car that would not start without a push. After pondering his problem, he devised a plan. He went to the school near his home, got permission to take some children out of class, and had them push his car off. As he made his rounds, he would either park on a hill or leave the engine running. He used his ingenious plan for over two years.

Ill health forced the Jackson family to leave, and a new missionary came to that station. When Jackson proudly began to explain his arrangement for getting the car started, the new man began looking under the hood. Before the explanation was complete, the new missionary interrupted, "Why, Dr. Jackson, I believe the only trouble is this loose cable." He gave the cable a twist, turned the switch, and the engine roared to life. For two years needless trouble had become routine. The power was there all the time. Only a loose connection kept Jackson from putting that power to work.

When trouble comes into your life, you also have a power source that will help you overcome the difficulties associated with the Christian life.

Check It Out

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

The early church knew real persecution. The modern day preaching of "health and wealth" would have been offensive to the early Christians who were constantly in fear of losing their lives for their faith. In many countries today people who accept the Lord as Savior are persecuted in ways you and I can only imagine.

Why do you think believers experience adversity and trouble in their lives?

_____

_____

_____

According to this passage what is the treasure that we have in our trials?

_____

_____

_____

How do these verses teach that we

Central Truth

Adversity and trials are a natural part of salvation.

are never alone during trouble?

What happens if you compare your problems and trials to what Jesus went through for you?

How can your reaction to troubles be a witness to those around you?

CHECK IT OUT

2 Corinthians 4:11-14

What kinds of persecution do Christians face in modern times?

Has there been a time in your life when you were silent about your faith because you didn't want to be ridiculed or made to look intolerant? Explain what happened.

How does knowing that people die every day because they are Christians change how you view your own persecution?

Even if a Christian dies because of his faith, what promise do we have in Christ?

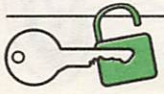
CHECK IT OUT

2 Corinthians 4:15-18

Imagine how Paul might have responded to the TV evangelist who claims that salvation brings a trouble free life and smooth sailing! The fact is, Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians, and you, to look beyond this short existence to the greater picture.

How does Paul describe the troubles we face in verse 17?

Compare verse 17 to the descriptive words in verses 8 and 9.



KEY VERSE

2 Corinthians 4:17

Why would Paul say that our afflictions last only a *"moment"* (verse 17)?

What is the purpose of our adversity according to verse 17?

How can you keep your eyes on eternity during adversity in your life?

LIFE RESPONSE

Endure difficulties with the power and strength of God.

If you are experiencing troubles it could be that God wants you to change your focus to things that are eternal. How you respond to trials in your life will be an obvious display of your faith and will show those around you how great your God truly is.

What is the difference between a trial, adversity, and persecution?

What are some things that you are experiencing now that could be considered adversity or trials?

How do you usually respond when you are experiencing adversity in your life?

Select one of the following scriptures and discuss how it can help you during adversity.

- 2 Timothy 3:12
- Romans 8:28
- James 1:12
- 1 Peter 4:12-14

How can your Bible study group be an encouragement for one another during difficulties?

My Time With God

Day 1
John 15:18-21
Life Prep of the Day:
Why does the world hate Jesus? What can you do about this hatred?

Day 2
Matthew 5:10-12
Life Prep of the Day:
What blessings have you received in the face of adversity?

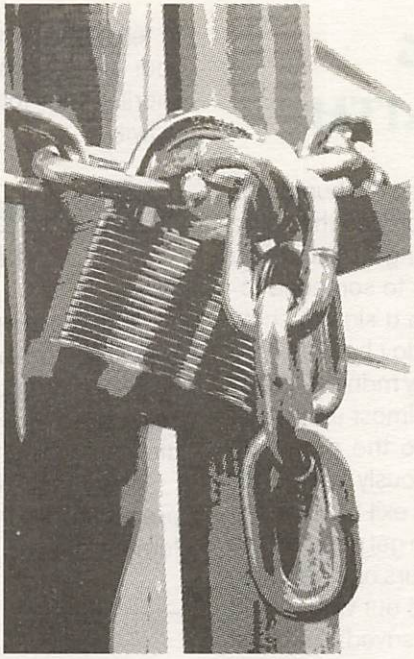
Day 3
Philippians 3:7-11
Life Prep of the Day:
How can adversity help you to know Christ in a more intimate way?

Day 4
Philippians 2:12-16
Life Prep of the Day:
How can you shine as lights that point people to Christ during a difficult time in your life?

Day 5
Philippians 1:12-18
Life Prep of the Day:
What are you doing to make sure that the gospel is spread in your community?

For online version
of "My Time With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

Once Saved, Always Saved



One of the traditional beliefs of Baptists is that once a person has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior there is no way that person can lose his salvation. We call this idea, security of the believer. There are some who say that if a person sins too much, then he can forfeit eternal life. Others say that a Christian must maintain his salvation through service and godly character.

However, the majority of scriptures teach that once a person knows Jesus, that person is eternally secure. Think about the following ideas to help you defend the doctrine of eternal security.

Jesus said that you gain eternal life by being *"born again"* (John 3:3). Do you know anyone who has been unborn? Once a person is born, that cannot be reversed. Therefore, logically, once a person has a spiritual birth to *"everlasting life"* (John 3:16) he is always alive.

Ephesians 2:9-10 and Titus 3:5 make it clear that there is nothing that we *do* to earn our salvation. Jesus gives us salvation through His grace; it is a gift to us. Since we did nothing to gain our salvation, what can we do to lose our salvation? One sin is all it takes to separate us from God, but grace gives us assurance of our relationship with Him.

The only way a person could lose his salvation is if God stopped being God. Ephesians 1:13-14 says that the Holy Spirit Who lives inside every believer is God's down payment for eternal life. If God was a liar then we could be worried about whether He could keep us secure, but since He is the eternal holy God, we can be confident in His promise.

Here are some other scriptures to help you know that you are eternally secure.

- John 10:27-29
- Romans 8:35-39
- 2 Timothy 1:12
- 1 Peter 1:3-5

Sharing Your Faith

Norman Cates shared the humorous story of a guy who prayed the same prayer every morning: "Lord, if you want me to witness to someone today, please give me a sign to show me who it is." One day he was on a bus when a big, burly man sat next to him. The bus was almost empty but this guy sat next to the man. The timid Christian anxiously waited for his stop so he could exit the bus. But before he could even get nervous, the big guy burst into tears and began to weep. He then cried out with a loud voice, "I need to be saved! I'm a lost sinner and I need the Lord! Won't somebody tell me how to be saved?" He turned to the Christian and pleaded, "Can you show me how to be saved?" The believer immediately bowed his head and prayed, "Lord, is this a sign?"

Are you looking for a "sign" to start witnessing? Are you eager to share your story with others? Are you waiting for God to dump someone in your lap or are you actively seeking others to tell your story to? A major part of God's plan in saving you is to use you to tell others what God has done in your life. God never intended your sharing your faith to be an optional activity.

Check It Out

1 Corinthians 9:18-19

Paul was a man with a mission. His conversion on the road to Damascus had been dramatic. God had specifically called Paul to a life of passionately preaching the good news.

How does Paul say that he is not preaching so that he can become famous or rich?

_____

_____

What was Paul's motivation for preaching the gospel?

_____

_____

How did Paul describe his role in verse 19?

_____

_____

How does having a servant's heart attract people to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Central Truth

God expects you to tell others about salvation.

How does Paul's statements reflect an attitude that sharing the gospel is a natural product of a person's relationship with Christ?

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 9:20-23

Which of the following statements best summarizes what Paul is saying in these verses?

- ❑ A. Paul used role play to help him communicate the gospel.
- ❑ B. Paul compromised his beliefs just so he could have many converts.
- ❑ C. Paul always had flashy presentations to attract a lot of people.
- ❑ D. Paul was sensitive to the cultural background and spiritual needs of his audience.

Do you think that the methods of sharing the gospel must be different for different cultures, age groups, and social backgrounds? Why or why not?

What would be the differences in sharing the gospel with a friend who regularly attends a church but is not saved, and with a person who does not own a Bible?

Do you think sharing the gospel is a ministry reserved for pastors, church staff, and other leaders in your church? Why or why not?

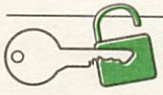
CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Paul often used athletic illustrations. When you compete in a sport what is the goal?

What should be the goal of every Christian?

How does Paul compare an athlete in training to a Christian who wants to serve Christ?



KEY VERSE

1 Corinthians 9:22

What was Paul's concern in these verses?

How does your lifestyle and reputation affect your ability to witness to someone?

LIFE RESPONSE

Be willing and know how to share the plan of salvation.

There is a "Peanuts" cartoon that shows Snoopy sitting outside in the middle of a snowstorm. He is shivering from the cold. Linus and Charlie Brown happen by and see Snoopy in his condition. They say, "There is Snoopy, let's go cheer him up." They go up to Snoopy and say, "Be of good cheer, Snoopy!" The next panel shows them walking off, leaving Snoopy in the same condition they found him, satisfied that they have "cheered" him up.

Somehow, we have gotten the idea that evangelism is only about teaching and preaching. But Jesus shows us that evangelism is much more than that. By healing people, Jesus reached out and demonstrated his compassion by doing things for them. He had actions that backed up His words.

Do you know how to lead a person to salvation in Christ?

❑ yes ❑ no ❑ not sure

How often have you shared with someone the need for salvation and how to have eternal life?

❑ never
❑ once or twice
❑ less than ten times
❑ many times

Do you feel your lifestyle and reputation promote your ability to witness or distract from it? Why?

Write down the names of at least two individuals in your circle of friends that you know need Jesus as Savior.

Write a prayer asking God to give you the opportunity, courage, and words to speak to people about Christ this week.

My Time With God

Day 1
Acts 1:8
Life Prep of the Day:
How do you feel this verse applies to your personal life?

Day 2
John 4:7-14
Life Prep of the Day:
How did Jesus use a personal need to talk about spiritual things? What are some other interesting ways to start a conversation about salvation?

Day 3
Acts 11:19-21
Life Prep of the Day:
Do you think it is more difficult to share the gospel with strangers or friends? Why?

Day 4
Acts 17:22-34
Life Prep of the Day:
Do you ever consider what judgment day (Acts 17:31) will be like for a Christian? Describe it in your own words.

Day 5
2 Corinthians 5:10
Life Prep of the Day:
If you were to stand before Christ today, how do you think He would rank your Christian service?

ILINE VERSION
With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

5x5 BLOG

A Final Exam

In *Words We Live By,* Brian Burrell tells of an armed robber named Dennis Lee Curtis who was arrested in 1992 in Rapid City, South Dakota. Curtis apparently had scruples about his thievery. In his wallet the police found a sheet of paper on which was written the following code:

1. I will not kill anyone unless I have to.
2. I will take cash and food stamps — no checks.
3. I will rob only at night.
4. I will not wear a mask.
5. I will not rob mini-marts or 7-Eleven stores.
6. If I get chased by cops on foot, I will get away. If chased by vehicle, I will not put the lives of innocent people on the line.
7. I will rob only seven months out of the year.
8. I will enjoy robbing from the rich to give to the poor.

This thief had a sense of morality, but it was flawed. When he stood before the court, he was not judged by the standards he had set for himself but by the higher law of the state.

Likewise when we stand before God, we will not be judged by the code of morality we have written for ourselves but by God's perfect law.

Check It Out

Romans 14:10-12

It's easy to sit back and make judgments of the actions of others. When Paul wrote this passage to the Christians at Rome what was it that he wanted them to do?

_____

_____

Those who do not understand salvation can easily make some dangerous assumptions. If salvation is not by works and once you are saved you cannot be lost again then you can do whatever you want to do, right? Why do you think that is a dangerous assumption?

_____

_____

_____

What does Paul say will happen to every believer (verses 10, 12)?

_____

Central Truth

Jesus will someday examine your life of service.

One day you will be asked to account for what you did in response to the gift that Jesus gave you. Who will you give an account to? Why is that important?

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 3:9-11

Paul is using a word picture to teach an important lesson about living the saved life. What does Paul compare our Christian lives to?

Who is the foundation of this spiritual building?

If Jesus Christ provided the foundation that is your salvation, the next logical step is to build your "spiritual house." How does a person build the spiritual house referred to in these verses?

Who does the scripture say is working with you in building this house?

How should that affect your focus on building with your life of service?

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

What is the difference between the sets of building materials listed?

What kinds of acts of service would be precious metals and jewels?

What kinds of things would be wood, hay, and straw?

How does Paul describe the way our spiritual buildings will be judged by God?

KEY VERSE

2 Corinthians 5:10

What will be the positive result from the judgment of God?

Life Response

Prepare today for the judgment seat of Christ.

Do you think you can sit idly by until you are a middle-aged adult and then start serving God? If so, you're wasting a lot of time and opportunity to be building your eternal rewards. God does not exempt young adults from service. You will have to give an account of these years to Jesus one day. What are you going to say to Him? There are hundreds of ways you can be serving Christ. Determine to build a golden skyscraper for Jesus.

What are you doing to build on your foundation? Think about your activities and service for the past two weeks. What have you done that would count as lasting building materials?

What if you wait until you are a middle-aged adult to start building? How would it be different than if you started right now?

Describe in your own words the reaction of a believer whose building is destroyed by the judgment fire of God.

How can you improve the quality and amount of your Christian service?

Would you be ready to give an account of your Christian service today? Why or why not?

Resources on the Web

1-to-1: Online is a Web site designed with you in mind. Not only will you find the 5 X 5 blog, but you can also find scriptures to help when you are facing a difficult time and links to other ministry sites. Log on today.

www.bph.org/5x5

My Time With God

Day 1
2 Timothy 4:8
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
What do you think it means to *"love His appearing"* (2 Timothy 4:8)? Do you?

Day 2
James 1:12
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Enduring temptation (or testing) brings great reward. The key to being able to endure is found here also — loving the Lord. How can you love the Lord, and how will that help you endure temptation and testing?

Day 3
1 Thessalonians 2:19-20
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Imagine what it would be like to stand in God's presence. How would you feel and what would you do or say?

Day 4
1 Peter 5:4
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
How is working for a crown different from receiving the free gift of salvation?

Day 5
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Is the event described in these verses a comfort to you or a call to action? Why?

NLINE VERSION
e With God" log on to *www.bph.org/1to1.html*

Salvation Examination

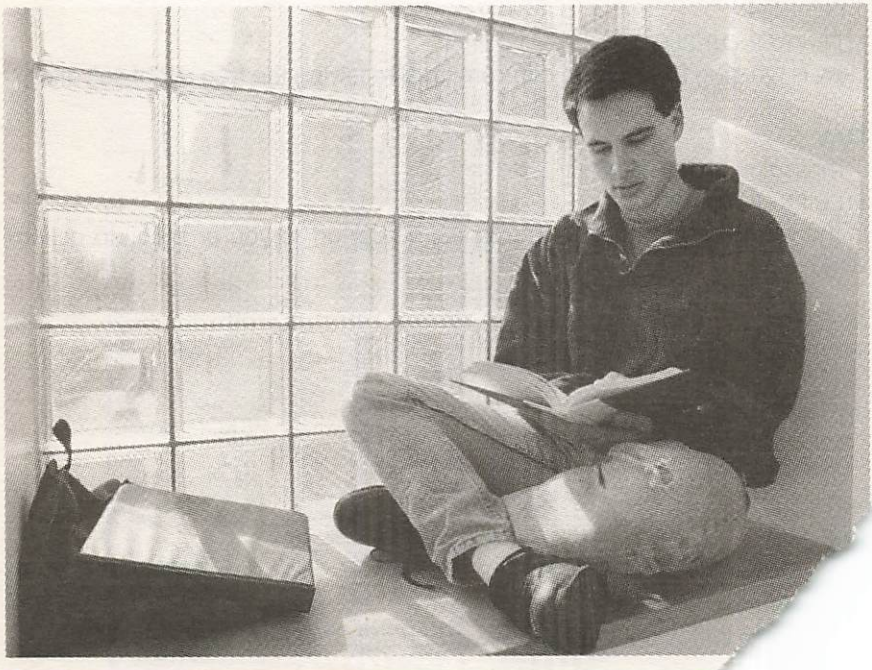
Complete the crossword puzzle to help you review the concepts studied in this Bible study series. Correct answers appear on page 25.

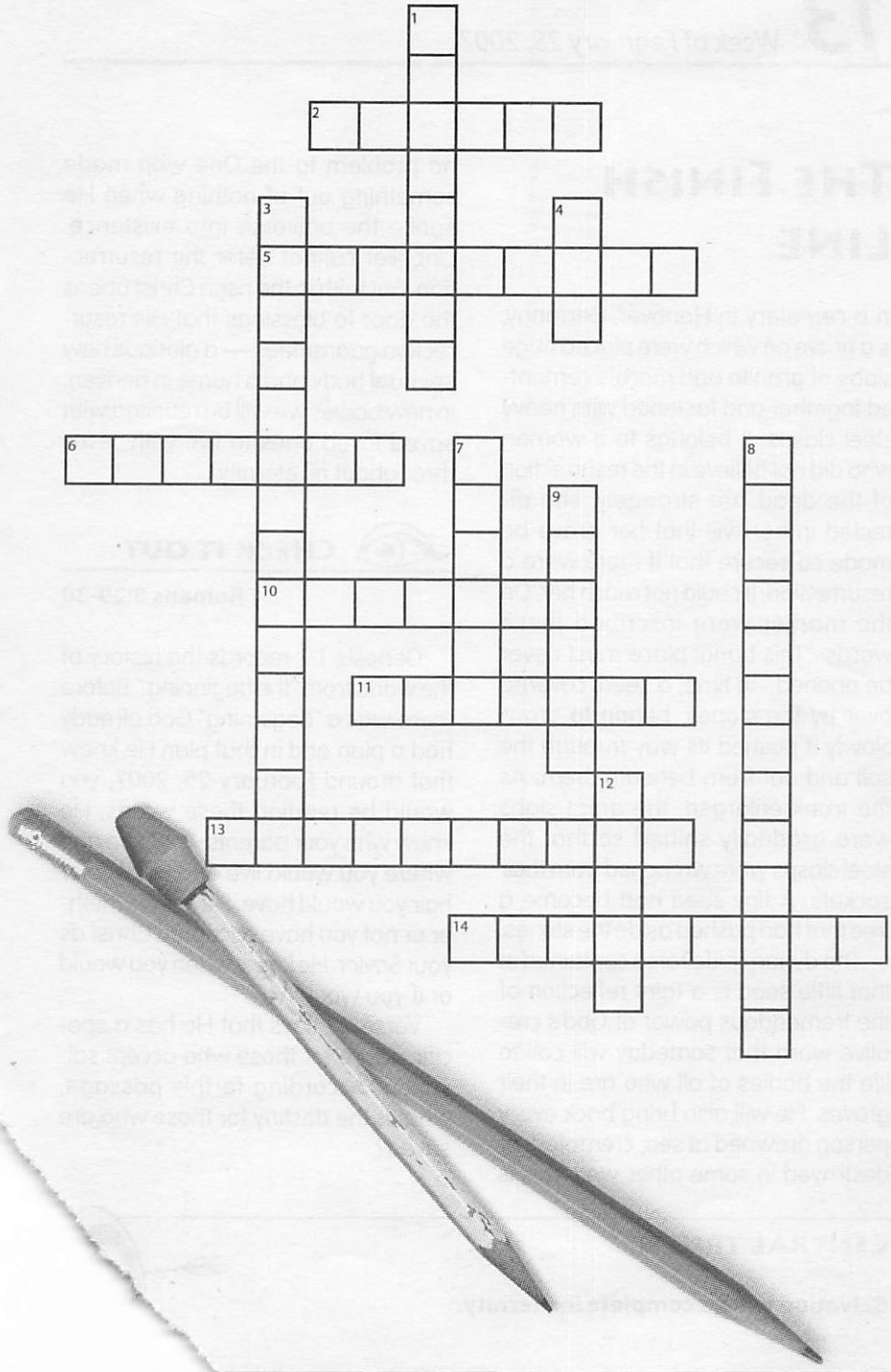
Across

2. to purchase in salvation
5. trouble or trial in the Christian life
6. pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus
10. you must __ with your mouth for salvation
11. to share your faith
13. type of bread used in Lord's Supper
14. being declared righteous by God

Down

1. every believer must stand before the __ seat of Christ
3. set apart for God's service
4. disobedience to God
7. to turn from sin
8. special ability given for service
9. means "good news"
12. penalty of sin

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The Finish Line

In a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, is a grave on which were placed huge slabs of granite and marble cemented together and fastened with heavy steel clasps. It belongs to a woman who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Yet strangely, she directed in her will that her grave be made so secure that if there were a resurrection, it could not reach her. On the marker were inscribed these words: "This burial place must never be opened." In time, a seed, covered over by the stones, began to grow. Slowly it pushed its way through the soil and out from beneath them. As the trunk enlarged, the great slabs were gradually shifted so that the steel clasps were wrenched from their sockets. A tiny seed had become a tree that had pushed aside the stones.

The dynamic life force contained in that little seed is a faint reflection of the tremendous power of God's creative word that someday will call to life the bodies of all who are in their graves. He will also bring back every person drowned at sea, cremated, or destroyed in some other way. This is no problem to the One who made something out of nothing when He spoke the universe into existence. Unbelief cannot deter the resurrection. But faith in the risen Christ opens the door to blessings that His resurrection guarantees — a glorious new spiritual body and a home in heaven. In new bodies we will be reunited with saved loved ones to live with Jesus throughout all eternity.

Check It Out

Romans 8:29-30

Genesis 1:1 records the history of the world from "the beginning." Before there was a "beginning" God already had a plan and in that plan He knew that around February 25, 2007, you would be reading these words. He knew who your parents would be and where you would live and what color hair you would have. He knew whether or not you have accepted Christ as your Savior. He knew when you would or if you wouldn't.

Verse 29 says that He has a specific desire for those who accept salvation. According to this passage, what is the destiny for those who are saved?

Central Truth

Salvation will be complete in eternity.

What do you think it means to be *"conformed"* (verse 29)?

Who does God desire you to be shaped like?

What is the probability that you can be exactly like Christ on this earth? Explain why you feel as you do.

There is only one way to escape the sin nature in our natural bodies — get rid of the natural body! What three things does verse 30 say that God has done for those who are saved?

Though you are not *"glorified"* at the present why do you think God refers to it as already happened?

CHECK IT OUT

2 Corinthians 5:1-2

What are the differences between a tent *("tabernacle")* and a house?

Paul uses different terms to represent the body. Your earthly house he calls a tabernacle (or tent) versus a heavenly house that you will have one day in glory.

Using this passage and the tent/house analogy, describe your new body in heaven:

How is that different from your body that you are using right now?

CHECK IT OUT

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

When Jesus returns and the trumpet sounds what will happen to those who are saved but have died?

KEY VERSE

1 Corinthians 15:57

What does it mean to be *"incorruptible"* (verse 52)?

What will happen to those who are still alive when Jesus returns?

How is the rapture and resurrection of believers a victory?

Why is it important to be always ready to meet Jesus in eternity?

LIFE RESPONSE

Anticipate with joy your eternal home with Christ.

You can't even begin to imagine what kind of wonderful things are waiting for you in heaven. At this point in your life though it may be that there are things you want to do before Jesus comes back. It's OK to admit that you aren't quite ready. God isn't ready yet either, or you would not be reading this. However, our eternal lives should be at the center of focus rather than our earthly lives.

What is the only way a person can be ready for Jesus to return and begin eternity?

What are some things that you will not miss about life on earth?

What is the first thing that you want to do when you enter eternity?

Why do you think that God planned for us to have new bodies and spend eternity with Him?

My Time With God

Day 1
1 Corinthians 15:12-19
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Complete this sentence: If Jesus never rose from the dead....

Day 2
Revelation 4:1-11
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
How will worship be different in heaven than it is on the earth now?

Day 3
Revelation 20:1-6
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
What would one thousand years without Satan be like?

Day 4
Revelation 21:1-4
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
Do you think there is anything about this current life that you will wish you could keep in eternity? Why or why not?

Day 5
Revelation 22:1-5
LIFE PREP OF THE DAY:
What is your favorite song about heaven or eternity? Why is it your favorite?

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5x BLOG

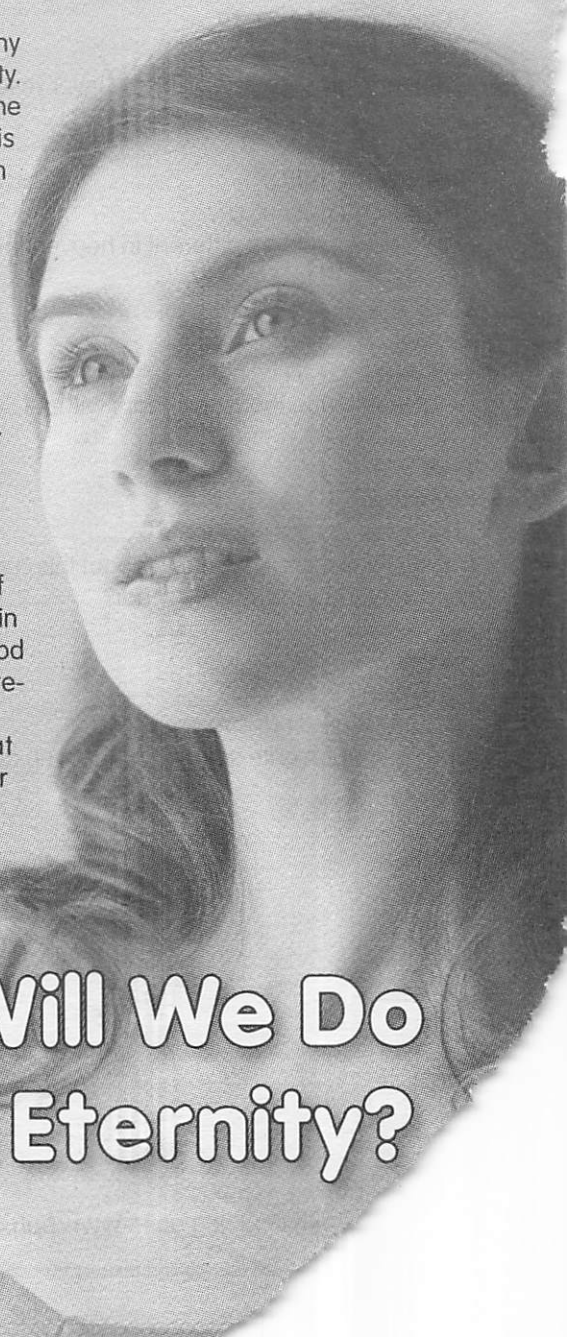
What Will We Do During Eternity?

Have you ever asked that question? I am sure that some of you have thought, *I get bored during the summer break from school. What am I going to do for millions and millions of years?*

The Bible does not give very many specific details about life in eternity. Some people have the idea that the only thing we will do in heaven is stand around the throne of God in worship and praise. No doubt, we will worship God since we will be in His presence, but Revelation 22:3 hints at the fact that each of us will also have some sort of ministry in heaven.

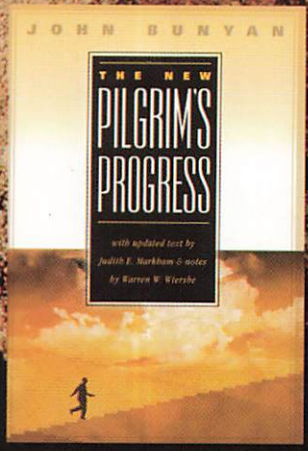
One thing will be certain. Since we will have perfect bodies, minds, and attitudes, we won't be bored. Even if we do the same thing over and over again for millions of years, we will be just as excited as on the first day. The excitement of heaven is not in what we do, but in the fact that we will experience God as man did at the beginning of Creation.

Being with God will be what makes eternity so special. Whether we sing and worship all day, have specific chores, or just hang out with all the millions of believers from the beginning of time, eternity with God is something that you do not want to miss.



IF YOU'RE A CHRISTIAN, YOU'RE A PILGRIM ON A JOURNEY!

Pilgrim's Progress, by John Bunyan, is a classic that has been read and enjoyed by literally millions of readers. It's an allegory much like the *Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis. An allegory in literature is a symbolic story. It has a deeper or more general meaning in addition to its surface meaning. In this story, the character, Christian, represents a follower of Christ on life's journey to the Celestial City. In other words, the events that occur in Christian's life are symbolic of the life we live as Christians. *Pilgrim's Progress* will entertain you, but more than that, it will strengthen you for life's journey. This edition has been updated to modern English.



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